

Raspberry Breeze by urdearestmom

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Summary: Sometimes she stays up with him, and she calls him ridiculous. How don't you fall over when you get up in the morning? She asks. Pfft, I don't need sleep! Who do you think I am? He says, but then he smiles and her heart melts, she's never been able to be angry at this boy for more than a few minutes.

Raspberry Breeze

Hey peeps! This was originally meant to be a chapter in my other fic, A is for Alphabet, but I liked it so much I had to post it now and it's going to be a standalone oneshot (within the universe I've created). Hope you enjoy!

It's summer. They're 18, the world is a beautiful place and life is worth living.

The sun beats down on their faces as they lie in the grass, basking in the hot light like two lizards on a rock in the desert.

Mike is asleep, the heat and his full stomach finally getting to him. She observes him as he snores lightly next to her on the picnic blanket; even though it's the most annoying sound ever, it's slightly more tolerable when it comes from Mike.

Her eyes trace his form, taking in every detail from head to toe, but then she goes back to his face. She almost laughs because he's so pale he's practically reflecting the sunlight and looks like he's glowing, much like she imagines a vampire would. But she doesn't, because she doesn't want to wake him. It's moments like these that she truly appreciates (not to say that she doesn't like Mike when he's awake, it's just that it's easier to stare when she knows he's not looking). He is always full of energy, always up to insane hours of the night doing something. He's the man who never sleeps.

Sometimes she stays up with him, and she calls him ridiculous. *How don't you fall over when you get up in the morning?* She asks. *Pfft, I don't need sleep! Who do you think I am?* He says, but then he smiles and her heart melts, she's never been able to be angry at this boy for more than a few minutes.

So it's nice to see him sleeping. He's relaxing for once instead of being overwhelmed with all the work he has to do for school on top of his job, and that's not even considering the fact that he somehow also makes time for his family, his friends, and for her. She doesn't know how he does it.

She supposes he takes on so much work to distract himself from what comes at night. She knows that some nights, he wakes up in a cold sweat, not knowing where he is or what he's doing there, and he panics. Some nights it takes him a little longer to realize he's in his bed, at home, and nobody is in danger. On those nights she's with him, because his distress is so strong it wakes her up too even though she's miles away. They talk it through, and when he's calmed down enough he goes back to sleep. On nights when she sits up in bed disoriented and scared she accidentally wakes him and he does the same for her. Even though they know nothing can harm them again, their shared experiences as children left them forever changed. It's hard to cope with sometimes, but that's what life dealt them and so that's how it has to be. Hopper said that to her once, and she thinks he's pretty right (he's usually pretty right, but she'll never tell him that).

He's so beautiful, she thinks. Dark curly hair spreads out around his head, hair that she loves to run her fingers through when she gets the chance. It wasn't always curly, but over time it lost its straightness and became an absolute mess. The good thing about this was that it made it harder to tell when they'd been making out, since both of them naturally had very messy hair (everyone still knew though, no matter how much they tried to pretend). His freckles also stand out more in summer, and she thinks they're the cutest thing. They're like constellations on his face and she loves to compare them to the night sky, even though it's hard to do that in the dark.

Suddenly, Mike lets out a particularly loud snore, bringing her attention to his mouth. She likes that mouth. She knows those lips better than she knows her own, at this point. And she loves them too, not just because they're enjoyable to kiss and be kissed by, but because they're part of Mike and that's reason enough. She stares at his face, and it makes her feel warm and fuzzy. She wonders if it's normal to have so many feelings just because of one person's face, or if it's the sun getting to her. She decides she's felt stranger things.

That morning Mike had appeared at her window at 5:15, waking her by throwing gravel from the driveway at it. *Come on*, he'd said. *I have something to show you*. When he said things like that she knew it was bound to be an hours-long adventure, so she had rushed to make her

bed and get dressed as quickly and quietly as possible, then wrote a note to her family before dashing out the front door.

Dear whoever wakes up first, I'm out with Mike and don't know how long I'll be. Don't expect me for lunch, but I'll call if I'm not coming to dinner.

~El

Then she had gotten into Mike's car and they had driven out here, but not before he gave her three toasted Eggos (they were cold, but still Eggos) and a bottled yogurt. It was still dark when they arrived, and she wondered what was happening. Mike had brought her to a stretch of forest about a mile after the LEAVING HAWKINS sign, leaving his car parked on the shoulder and leading her through the trees. They came upon a clearing and it was here that he put down what he'd been carrying, which she then realized was a picnic basket. She could tell that there was a body of water in the clearing, but she couldn't tell if it was a pond or a lake. They were surrounded by trees on all sides. Once he had the blanket laid out and the basket off to the side, Mike beckoned her to lie down. *Look*, he said, pointing to where the sky was beginning to turn pink, *the sun's rising!*

That sunrise had been a beautiful one. They were all beautiful, and sometimes she liked to watch them by herself, but watching with Mike had made it ten times better. Something about his presence makes everything shinier and more amazing. She thinks it's just him in general that does it. He's a bright soul, and in turn brightens everything around him. That's partially why she loves him so much. He's literally the light of her life.

Afterwards they had lain and talked; about everything and anything, from Dustin and Max and how they were dealing with their breakup, to Will's decision to move to Montréal to be a "starving artist" as he called it, to their own life goals and what they expected out of college in the fall. They could talk for hours in such a fashion, which is exactly what they ended up doing.

When the sun was high in the sky, Mike took out some sandwiches and fruit from the picnic basket, along with a bottle that had a slight pink tinge to it. When she'd asked what it was, he had laughed and said, *You can't tell my mom but, it's raspberry champagne. I stole it from*

storage in the basement, she keeps it around for parties but she'll never notice one bottle's missing if no one tells her, and she promised not to tell. They ate the sandwiches and the fruit and then Mike poured out some of the champagne into two plastic cups he'd brought. It's not the classiest, but it's the best I could do, he said sheepishly, handing one to her. I'm going to make a toast, a toast to us, and to life and love and happiness! They drank. I love you.

It makes her smile remembering it, even though it was just an hour ago. This is the best day of her life, she decides, surpassing just about everything she can think of. She's warm, full of good food, with someone she loves, and brimming with happiness. How could it get better than this?

She runs a finger down Mike's face from his forehead to his chin and he stirs a little bit, eyes opening to reveal the dark pools she gets caught in more often than she likes to admit. He closes them again and smiles a small smile when he realizes it's just her. She lies down next to him, putting an arm across his chest and her head under his chin. This is how she falls asleep too, underneath the sun with the person she loves most in the world, the trees whispering around them. He smells like the champagne they drank and she thinks this is the way her life should be: just the two of them wrapped in a raspberry-scented summer breeze.